

I see a purple door and want it painted red, no purple anymore, I want them to turn red

Written by dreamkatcha. Any related videos, as always, can be found on my YouTube channel.

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If you bought the Cartoon Classics Amiga 500+ pack between July 1991 and September 1992 you'll be familiar with the first in a long line of 31 Simpsons licensed games known as Bart Versus the Space Mutants.

Although by this stage Bart "I Didn't Do It" Simpson and his dysfunctional, eternally young family were already widely known thanks to the voracity of the marketing juggernaut that saw to it that they appeared on every conceivably brandable doohickey in the known universe, initially they were a major *event* exclusive to Sky TV.

The Simpsons - created by Matt Groening - made their debut via three seasons worth of animated 'shorts' on The Tracey Ullman Show beginning in April 1989. However, their exponential worldwide popularity soon saw them spin off into their own 22-ish minute episodic show in December 1989, and a now enormous production crew are still cranking out new series to this day.

Of course, you knew all that already because we're talking about the award-winning, longest-running American sitcom and animated TV show of all time. Enough said.



In the UK at least, as the show could initially only be seen on Sky - much like the WWF wrestling - it became all the more alluring, and a reason in itself to subscribe. Before then, despite its popularity stateside, it was an unknown quantity in the UK. One that Gary Bracey didn't imagine would emerge as a gaming tie-in golden goose, so passed up on the opportunity to secure the license, much to his regret.

"There was an article in USA Today about a forthcoming TV show which sounded great. I gave a strong recommendation to the head of Ocean US, but he had never heard of it and didn't like the sound of it.

A few months later the first show was broadcast and was an instant hit. By then, however, Acclaim had already licensed it for all formats. We had to make do with the 'scraps' by sub-licensing the home computer formats from Acclaim.

Oh yes, the title was some obscure cartoon called 'The Simpsons'."

Gary Bracey, The Ocean Experience (17th February 2005)

Acclaim - under the auspices of Matt Groening - set about developing an 'inspired by the TV show' title for the NES, which was later ported to all the usual 8-bit and 16-bit suspects, while Ocean were only drafted in to oversee and publish the home computer ports produced by Arc Developments.



All versions are very similar in terms of genre and design when taking into account the capabilities of the various host systems. They can best be categorised as puzzle-platformers comprising five levels, concluding with a boss battle interspersed with mini-games and sub-bosses.



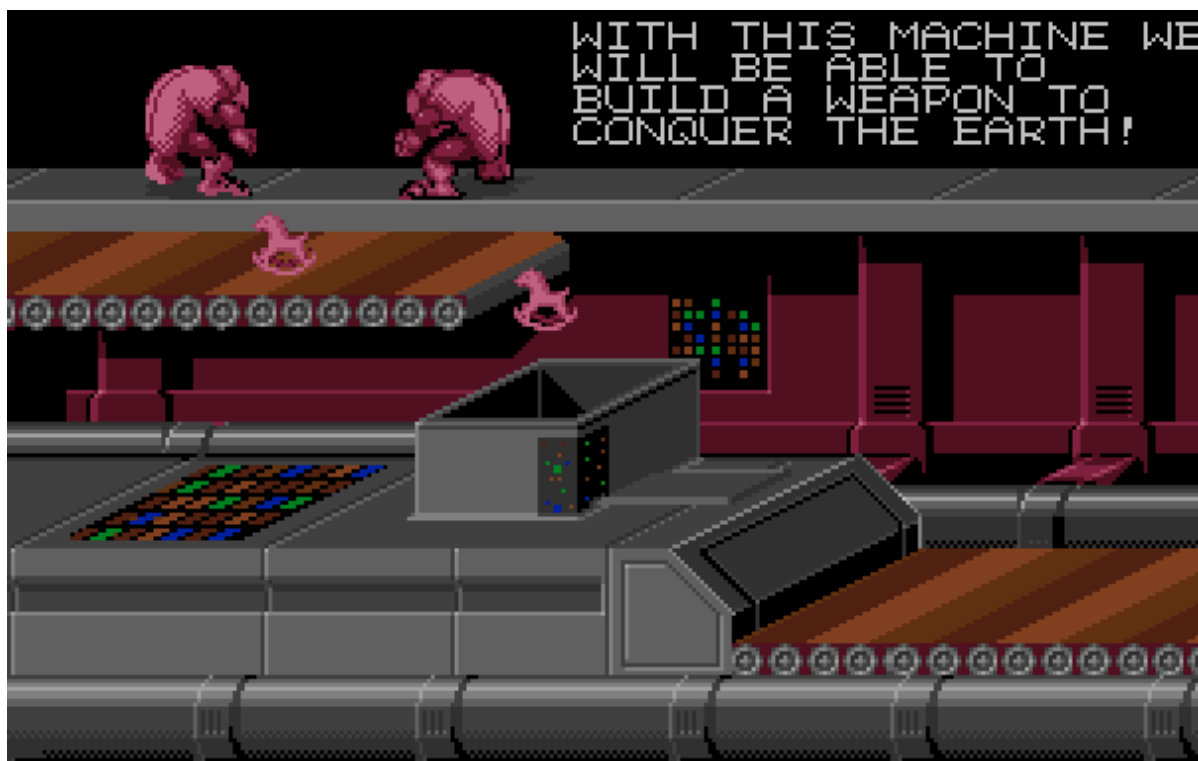
Playing as the chief mischief-maker - a child who by rights should have his own designated seat in detention - ironically we're here to save the planet from an alien invasion. An invasion only Bart is privy to because he witnessed the landing from his bedroom window. Whatever they are, "They ain't from Cleveland."



As the story goes, two of the eponymous space mutants are here to locate precisely the right kind of ingredients required to power their planet-conquering device. Obviously it's our duty to thwart their nefarious plans; public services are overstretched as it is without having to support E.T.s!

This being a Simpsons spin-off that must all have seemed a bit pedestrian to the game's five designers so the kind of fuel required was tweaked to ramp up the bizarre rating, and switched for each level as you successfully cut off their supply.

In the first level anything that's purple can be fed into the alien's machine. Next up it's hats, balloons, exit signs and finally nuclear rods, one of the few collectables that are actually relevant to the TV show, because of course Homer 'works' in a nuclear power plant... when he's not preoccupied testing doughnuts.



All this is explained in a charmingly authentic, albeit glacially paced and minimally animated introduction that even includes short bursts of Bart's real voice. Well, Nancy Cartwright's voice actually. It's followed by the game's title splatting onto the screen in a burst of what seems like tomato squash, yet judging by the box art was intended to be spray paint.

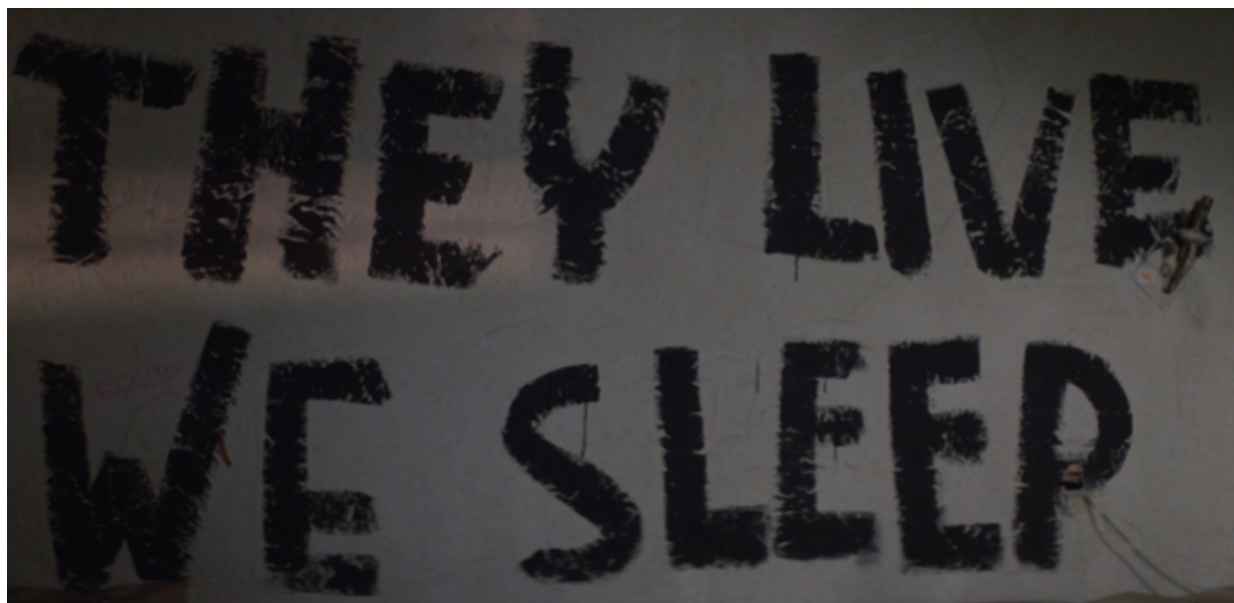
Impressive for the time it evokes the same vibe as the cartoon, except the story unfolds in slow-motion because it all had to load from a clunky old floppy disk. In fact, disk one of the double disk game is entirely devoted to the opening precis sequence. This was the brainchild of Arc Developments (also responsible for McDonald Land, R-Type II, Bart vs. The World and WWF European Rampage Tour).



Yes, that certainly is Rowdy Roddy Piper, the former WWF wrestler! ...and former human being (he died in 2015 from a cardiopulmonary arrest at the age of just 61).

The short demo-esque movie (exclusive to the standalone release) depicts aliens touching down in the Simpsons'

backyard and Bart discovering that to blend into the scenery they are able to enslave human beings by snatching their bodies. Not at all dissimilar to John Carpenter's 'They Live' or the 1953 movie 'Invaders from Mars' then.



To get a closer look and avoid being blinded by the UFO's landing lights Bart slips on his x-ray specs, and serendipitously it transpires that this allows him to reveal their true form.



A new-found skill that will be exploited in the first two levels where you'll need to distinguish between people who haven't been enslaved by extraterrestrials, and those that have.



John Nada: You see, I take these glasses off, she looks like a regular person, doesn't she? Put them back on (puts the sunglasses back on) ...formaldehyde-face!



By pulling down on the joystick and pressing fire you can access your inventory and select the toy x-ray specs. Perhaps they're the same brand which seven years later Millhouse is hornswoggled into purchasing from Yokingham Palace, Springfield's prank emporium. While episode 202 didn't air until May 1998, it's a popular sci-fi concept dating back decades before Bart was a zigzag in Matt Groening's sketchbook.

Milhouse: Check it out, Bart! X-Ray specs. Hey! these don't work.

Sarcastic Guy: Ah... lead shirt.

Milhouse: I'll take three pairs. Here's my prescription.



Whatever the origin, we launch our world-saving, self-appointed mission as an authentic rendition of the iconic theme tune composed by Jonathan Dunn kicks in. As accurate and heart-warming as it is, it's sadly the only music we hear throughout the five levels. It plays incessantly on a loop so soon starts to harass your lugholes to the point where you'd rather mute the audio altogether.

As the residents of Springfield amble past you on the sidewalk you can head-bounce the hijacked ones to release the invaders and in the process earn a coin that can be spent on useful objects in the various shops dotted around the high street.

"I have come here to chew bubblegum and kick ass, and I'm all out of bubble gum."

Any humans without tentacles poking out of the top of their heads when you switch to sepia mode should be left alone as attempting to exorcise them, in the same way, will result in

the loss of one of your lives' two hit points. While seemingly a bit stingy at first, your three lives can be topped up by collecting Krusty the Clown tokens or amassing 15 coins. The latter option deducts 10 coins from your total so it's rather like *buying* lives.



Your goal, in the beginning, is to paint, cover or otherwise remove from view any objects that happen to be purple. You'd do well to ignore that they actually look closer to *pink*, otherwise you'll be totally lost. In the NES version, even Bart's shorts and trainers are pink in the first stage; you might want to let that go too and pray we don't end up being fed into the aliens' world-dominating gizmo ourselves. You never know, telling people to "eat my shorts" might actually be a good idea for once!

Some items can simply be sprayed red, while dealing with others is a tad more puzzling. Buying a wrench from the tool shop, for instance, allows us to loosen a water hydrant which in turn douses a newly painted shop canopy, washing the problematic colour away.



Kicking a rolling ball up at a paint can which consequently falls onto a purple veranda turning it red is just one of the creative techniques Bart devises to fulfil his objective. I can't fathom how pink paint when tipped onto a purple veranda equals red, but then perhaps I need to brush up on my Bartology.



Find the phone box located next to Moe's Tavern and you can spend a coin prank calling him as Bart does countless times on TV. Stu Piddidot, Oliver Clothesoff and Al Coholic are some of the suspiciously named acquaintances you try to contact in the gaming interpretation. It must have been quite a challenge whittling the list down to a small selection.

(at Moe's Tavern) Homer: I'm just a technical supervisor who cared too much.

(phone rings) Moe: Moe's Tavern.

Bart: (on phone) Is Mr. Freely there?

Moe: Who?

Bart: Freely, first initials I.P.

Moe: Hold on, I'll check. Uh, is I.P. Freely here? Hey everybody, I.P. Freely! (barflies laugh)

Moe: Wait a minute. (talks into the phone again) Listen to me you lousy bum. When I get a hold of you, you're dead. I swear I'm going to slice your heart in half!
(Bart and Lisa laugh)

Homer: You'll get that punk someday, Moe.

Moe: Oh I don't know, he's tough to catch. He keeps changing his name.

Further along the horizontally scrolling street, a cherry bomb (bought from Mel's Novelty Hut) is used to scare away a parrot located in the window of the pet shop. Strangely logical for this game, you can't spray it through the glass.



Another bird is 'encouraged' to move along from its perch on a statue of Jebediah Springfield using a firework rocket. Hit it half a millimetre to either side and you've wasted your ammo, forcing you to backtrack and acquire more. It does make you wonder why a direct hit with a rocket doesn't kill it outright, and also if a *dead* purple bird would still count as alien despot fuel. Rather like feeding Gremlins after midnight, the rule book's small print was never written.

Jebediah: (on film) A noble spirit embiggens the smallest man.

Mrs. Krabappel: Embiggens? I never heard that word before I moved to Springfield.

Ms. Hoover: I don't know why. It's a perfectly cromulent word.

Jebediah - pirate hero and founder of Springfield - is the first of the game's recognisable characters from the TV show that we encounter. He features in lots of Simpsons episodes, though the one specifically alluded to here with the quote, "Victory comes to those who get ahead" is 'The Tell-Tale Head' from season 1 (episode 8 to be exact).

In it, Bart dismembers the statue's noggin with a hacksaw to impress the delinquent school bullies, Jimbo, Kearney and Dolph, and is flabbergasted when even *they* show their disdain for his disrespectful behaviour.



(Chief Wiggum leads a press conference about the town statue.) Chief Wiggum: (clears throat) Well, we have no witnesses, no suspects, and no leads. If anyone has any information, please dial '0' and ask for the police. That number again, '0'.

Bart soon feels remorseful and sets about returning the stolen property to make amends. Jebediah's head is restored, though never properly reattached, setting up what would become a recurring gag centred around the head repeatedly falling off. You have to know *why* he keeps losing his head to find it funny, then that's the beauty of The Simpsons. Half the fun is spotting the in-jokes.

It wouldn't be a Simpsons game without a skateboarding section. It *is* so there *is*, and it's reminiscent of the relevant

parts of Wonderboy, except it features Jimbo as an opponent rather than snakes and fire.

Apu's Kwik-E-Mart doesn't play a huge part in the 'Streets of Springfield' level (or anywhere else), though if you shoot the E in the sign with a rocket you can make it fall to the ground and disintegrate. In the process, you earn an extra life.



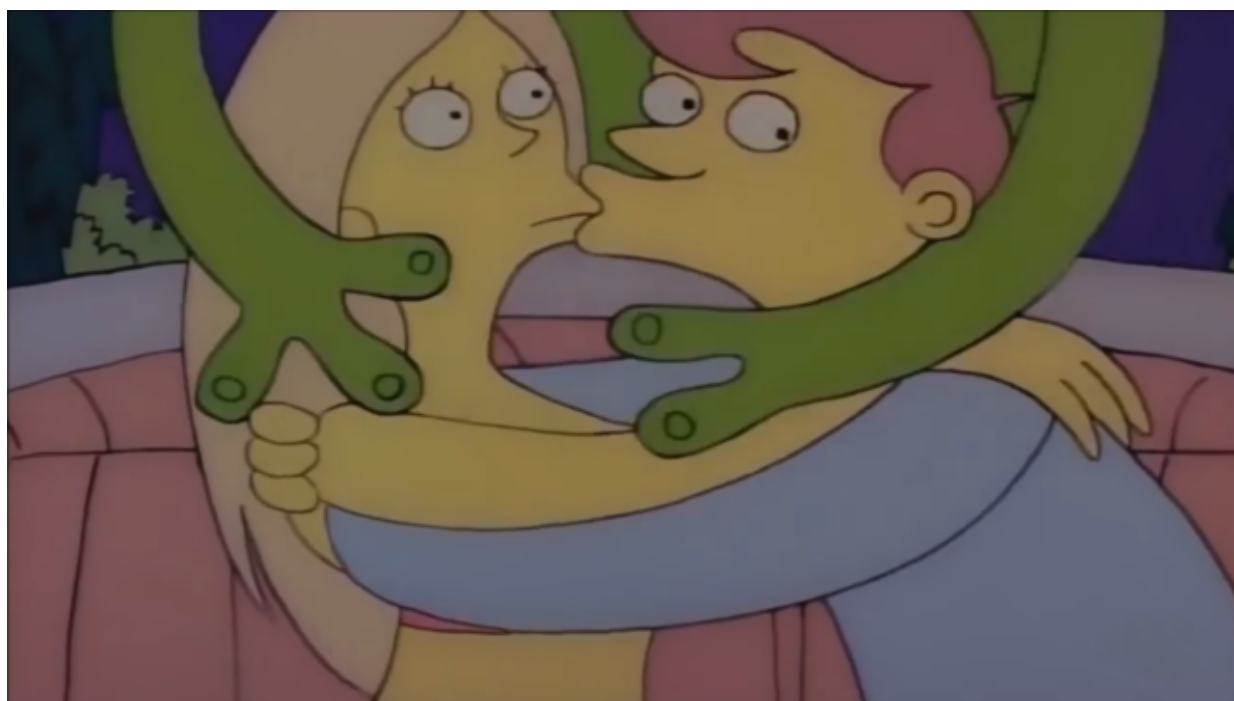
That I believe is an egg of the Easter variety. Another one involves waiting outside the cinema until the time on the clock matches the movie's finish time. At which point a purple man wanders out, ripe for spray painting.

Chief Wiggum: Well, it's no secret. Our city is under siege by a graffiti vandal known as, 'El Barto'. Police artists have a composite sketch to go over and if anyone has any information, please contact us immediately.

(A sketch of an older, stubbly, mean-looking version of Bart is passed around) Bart: Cool, man.



Space Mutants 4, the film currently showing at the cinema, is a none too subtle nod towards the cheesy B movie franchise often seen running at the Aztec Theater or Springfield Googolplex Theatres.



It features in seven episodes of the TV show and four video games. As you might have already guessed, the plots tend to gravitate towards alien invaders visiting earth and eating the human inhabitants in various novel scenarios, often while they're "making the beast with two backs".





At the Springfield retirement home, we must shoot several roller blinds with our rockets to cause them to retract, thereby covering up the bothersome, purply-pink wonder

fuel. If we bought the whistle when calling into the toy shop we can use it here to summon Grandpa Simpson, who pops out to give us some extra coins.

Barney's Bowlarama poses a similar dilemma because its sign is, wait for it... *purple* of all the hues in the world! What are the chances? Not to worry - shooting the neon sign causes its LEDs to switch from emitting purple light to red. Hey, no-one said any of this had to make sense. It *is* after all much like an annual Treehouse of Horror Halloween episode in playable form.

Fans of the show will immediately recognise the Bowlarama tenpin bowling alley belonging to Barney Gumble's uncle Al as it appears in quite a few episodes. It has been burnt down, rebuilt, subsequently destroyed once more, and was even relocated to a mountain top in 'Hurricane Neddy' (S08E08).



Barney's Bowlarama is also the setting for one of Homer's many mid-life crises; specifically the one where he jacks in his job at the power plant to become a 'pin monkey', realises he can no longer pay the bills what with another mistake (I mean *baby*) on the way and has to go crawling back to Monty Burns to grovel for his old job back.

Homer: Ah, another perfect day in my perfect life with my perfect job.

Chief Wiggum: (driving by) Hey, just heard the news over the squawk box. That's nice work, Homer.

Homer: Thank you, thank you very much. It is nice work.

Apu: Oh, Mr. Simpson, I have just heard about the little bundle of joy. Congratulations, sir!

Homer: It's true, the bundle is little, but I'm not in it for the money.

Moe: Hey, Homer! Way to get Marge pregnant! Haha...

Homer: This is getting very abstract, but thank you, I do enjoy working at the bowling alley.

(Homer enters the house) Homer: Hey, wait a second... What are all these presents? It looks like you're showering Marge with gifts... hmm... With little tiny baby-sized gifts. Well, I'll be in the tub.

Maude: Oh and by the way, congratulations on your new job, Homer.

Homer: New job? Marge is pregnant!? Noooooooooo!
Aahhhhhhh!

Walking across a clothes line we dislodge several items of laundry which drift down to the ground covering more otherwise inaccessible purple objects. Ha! Those dimwitted aliens will never find them now they've been draped with a couple of hankies, or whatever they are.

Continuing like so, ticking off the de-purpled items as we go, the number of 'goals' in the HUD counts down until it reaches zero. This frees us to tackle the concluding boss battle with one eminent (or obscure) Springfield resident or another.



At the end of the first level this is a giant Nelson 'Ha-ha!' Muntz, the chief bully from the cartoon, also voiced by Nancy Cartwright. To defeat Nelson we shoot him with rocks, and providing we've collected each letter spelling out Maggie's name, she puts in a cameo appearance, chucking bowling balls to assist us.

Marge: Well, Bart, I hope you're going straight to the principal about this!

Bart: I guess I could do that.

Homer: What?! And violate the code of the schoolyard?! I'd rather Bart die!

Marge: What on earth are you talking about, Homer?!

Homer: The code of the schoolyard, Marge! The rules that teach a boy how to be a man! Let's see: Don't tattle, always make fun of those different from you, never say anything unless you're sure everyone feels exactly the same way you do, and what else...?



In level 2 the unnamed aliens (presumably not Kang and Kodos who are also eternally fixated on conquering the earth) give up on the purple object masterplan and reconfigure their technology to accept hats instead. Why they keep telling Bart what the magic ingredient is in each case is a mystery, like much of the bizarre plot. Still, it would be a short, one-sided game if the aliens won without any opposition.



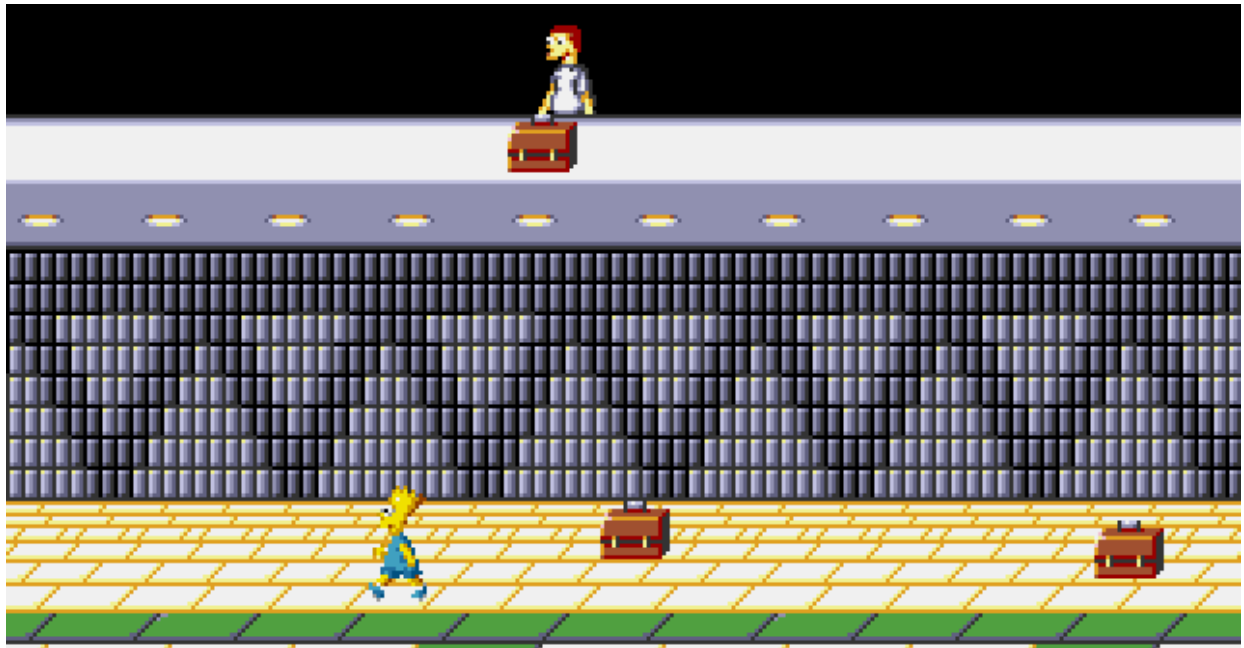
Hats of all shapes and sizes can be swiped off the heads of genuine shoppers in the shopping mall by jumping at them, or by bashing in the heads of pseudo-humans once you've identified them as such with your x-ray specs. In between heists you must dodge possessed rubber rings and shoes, and grapple with mini mid-level bosses. Keep an eye out for Michael Jackson's Moonwalking footwear!

Outside The Really Big Shoe store (a reference to Ed Sullivan's quirky pronunciation of *show*) you face a man riding inside a monster-sized, cowboy roper boot style Goomba's Shoe. Just when you think you've beaten the main boss, the level continues until you stumble across another semi-boss, a magician, presumably the proprietor of 'Just Magic'.

Headgear can also be collected from the environment, usually by reaching elusive vantage points that demand the execution of sprint-jumps or precision platform balancing. Something which also comes in very handy when crossing the cordoned off newly cemented area using rotating

lollipops you can only stand on when their sticks are horizontally oriented.

A second wet cement sequence has you hopping across wider, more easily targeted levitating sweets that can be skipped entirely if you bounce on the second sweet several times in a row turning it into a speedy travelator. This isn't the only 'warp' in the game that allows you to traverse levels faster than you would normally by walking. I'll let you root out the remainder for yourselves. I don't want to spoil *all* the surprises.



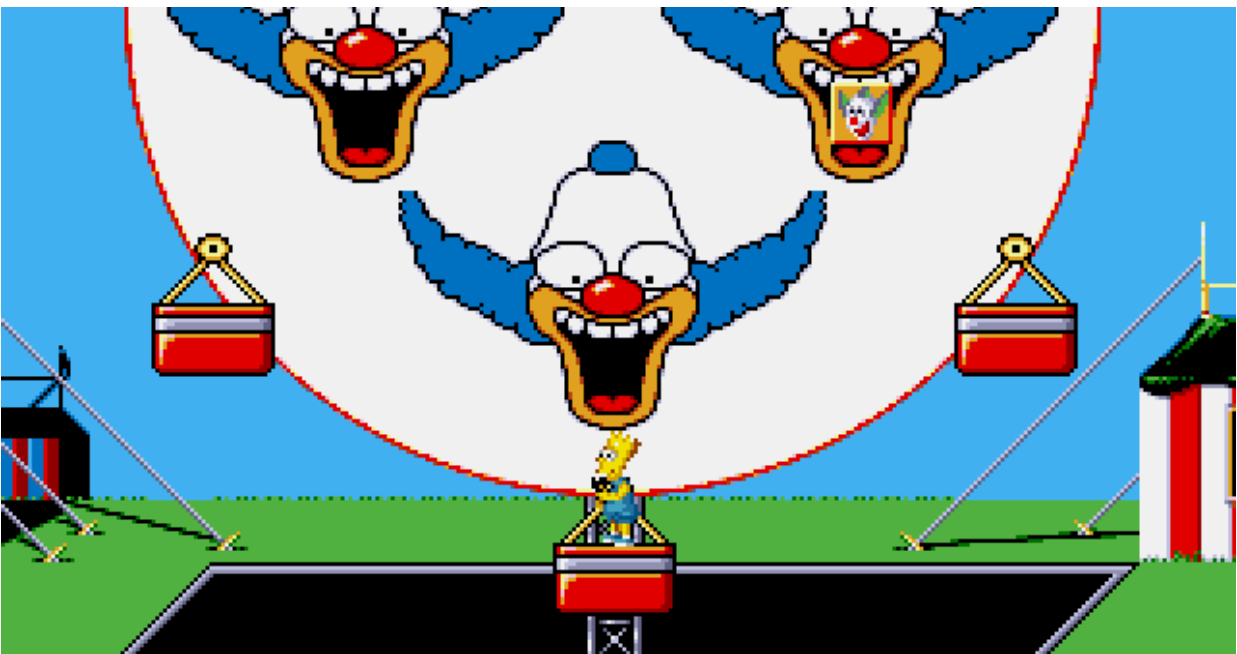
At the end of this level you square up to Lucille Botzowski, the bandit babysitter fugitive, featured in 'Some Enchanted Evening' (S01E13).

(After Ms. Botz ties up Bart and Lisa) Bart: We know who you are, Ms. Botz, or should I say, Ms. Botzowski. You're the Babysitter Bandit!

Ms. Botz: You're a smart young man, Bart. I hope you're smart enough to keep your mouth shut.

Lisa: He isn't.

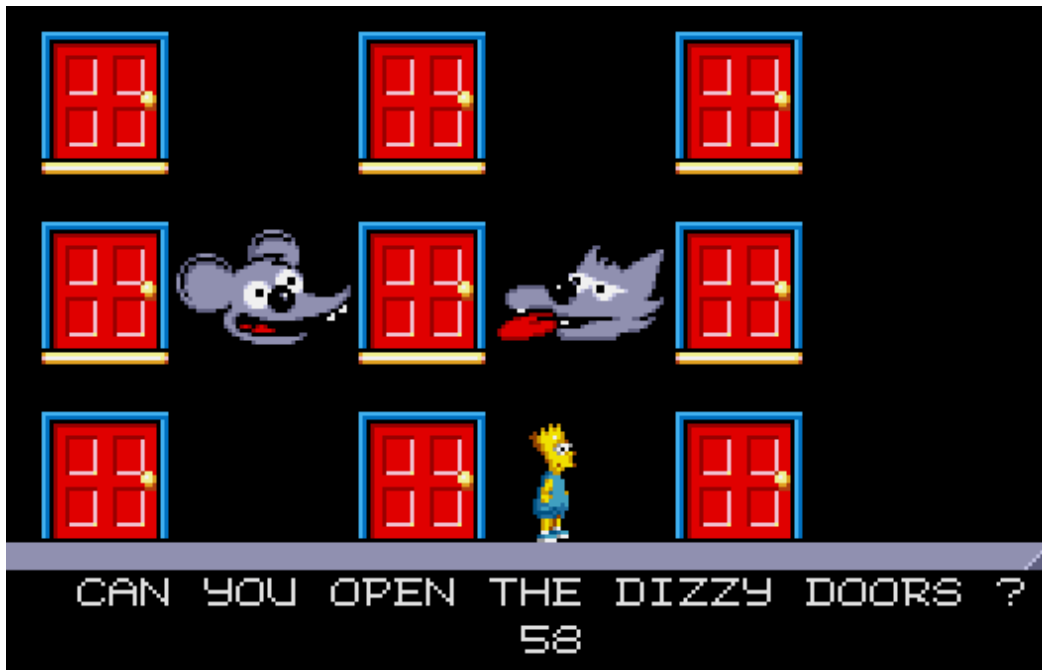
Here Ms Botz runs back and forth along the upper level of the mall hurling luggage at you. It's your task to deflect it back at her, with Marge standing at the sidelines firing projectiles to knock some of the bags out of her grasp before they can be dropped. Again that's providing you have collected all the letters in her name by bouncing 'proof' out of the heads of human imposters. Proof that convinces your family that you aren't crying wolf, I mean *alien*.



Next up is the Krustyland amusement park where collecting or destroying balloons with a slingshot is the in vogue means of hindering the aliens' scheme to create the Ultimate Weapon. This understandably is mini-game central, giving us the opportunity to boost our coin stash. Believe it or not Krustyland exists for realies... in Orlando And I'm not even kidding, innit.

In one such game of skill/chance we must throw darts to burst three red balloons, investing coins to win more. Another

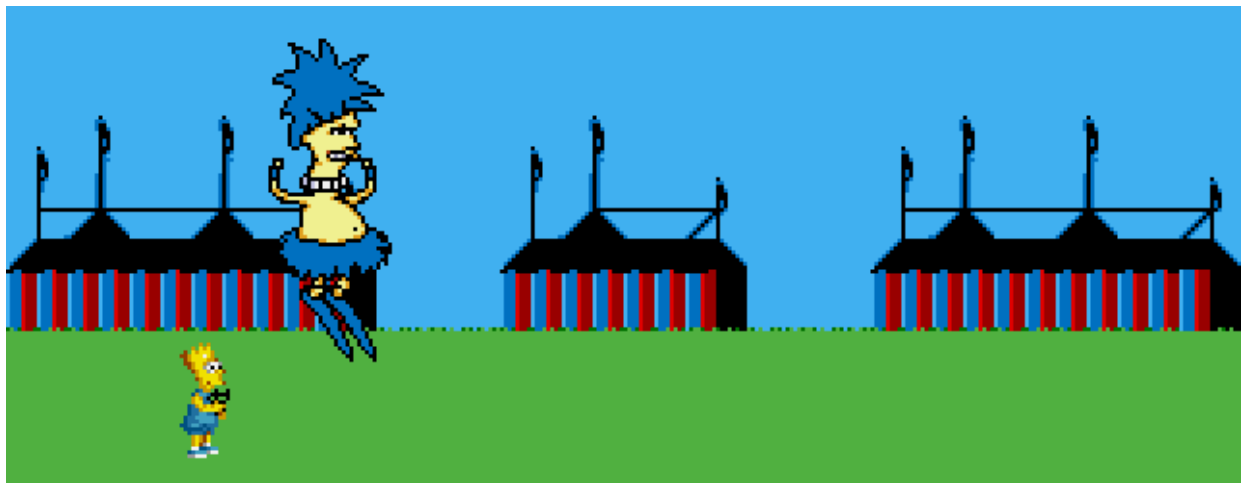
entails changing the colour of doors in the fun-house by leaping in front of them in the correct sequence.



Then there's the obligatory duck shooting gallery, baseball target practice interlude where the aim is to hit three smiley faces in a row, and a roulette wheel. Ironically none of them are a whole heap of fun, and your tasks are made that much more of a chore as you're still vulnerable to attack from Zebloids and Glondips.



"Krustyland has a new ride, the Eyeballs of Death. It only passed the safety by a 3 to 2 vote. And that third vote didn't come cheap."



Traitor and out on parole convict Sideshow Bob - our arch-nemesis - is the big bad boss this time. He looks the part except he's decked out in the wrong colours, which is why at first I thought he was supposed to be Sideshow Mel who *does* have turquoise hair, albeit with a bone through it.

Sideshow Bob: (in handcuffs) Yes, I admit it. I hated him! His hackneyed shenanigans robbed me of my dignity for years. I played the buffoon, while he squandered a fortune on his vulgar appetites. That's why I framed Krusty! And I would've gotten away with it, too, if it weren't for these meddling kids!

Bart: Take him away, boys.

Sideshow Bob: (being carted off to jail) Treat kids like equals, they're people too. They're smarter than what you think! They were smart enough to catch me!

Lisa is Bart's little helper for this particular skirmish. Hovering overhead on a swing she stuns Bob with bowling balls so we can stamp on his oversized clown feet until he dive-bombs off the edge of the screen.



Now it's onto another Springfield landmark, the Museum of Natural History where exit signs are the new target. Like the Bowlarama the museum was burnt down and resurrected, but then voluntarily closed due to lack of patronage. It's also the

stage for level one of the Simpsons video game, Bartman Begins.



We meet a brontosaurus who can simply be clambered over to progress, there are prehistoric carcasses to navigate and bound across and a jungle section that looks like it's been extracted from a totally different game. A game with much better visuals.



Jumping repeatedly on the glass display case containing Jebediah's head releases it, granting you invulnerability for a short period. Although not long enough to reach the mummy mini boss sadly.

Sherri: Hey, Bart. Our dad says your dad is incompetent.

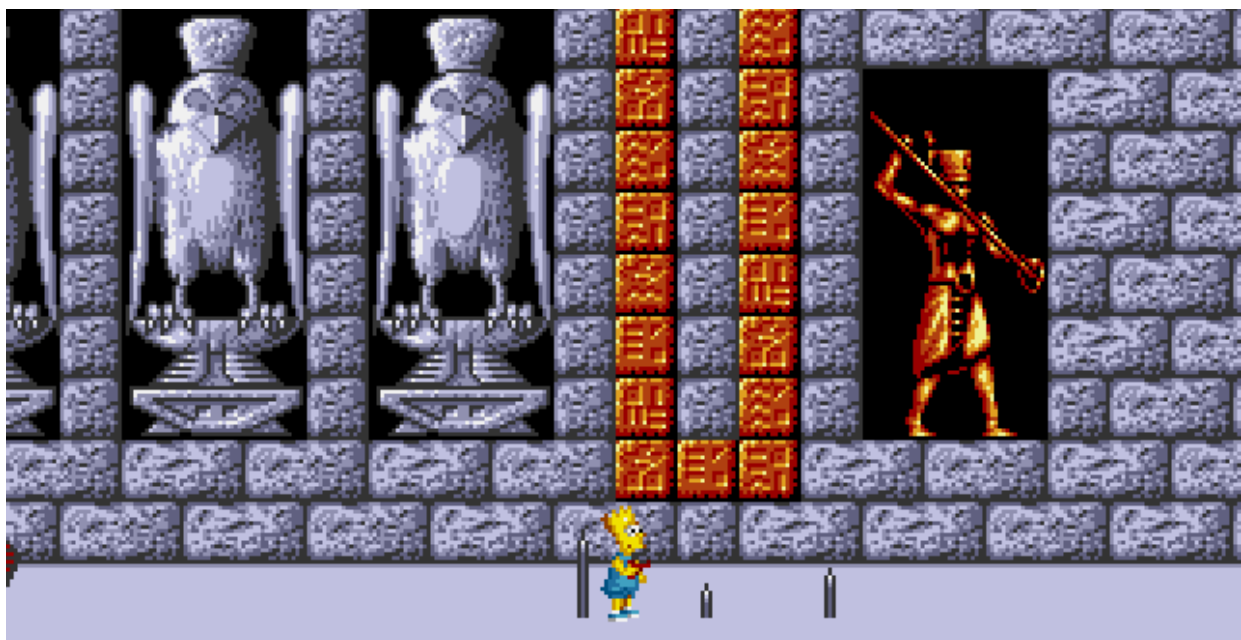
Bart: What does "incompetent" mean?

Terri: It means he spends more time yakking and scarfing down donuts than doing his job.

Bart: Oh, okay. I thought you were putting him down.

Running contra to convention, Daddy Simpson, Homer, is our saviour here, emerging from a picture frame to bombard Dr Marvin Monroe with projectiles.

Marvin Monroe: OK. You want to kill each other. That's good. That's healthy. There's nothing necessarily wrong with hostile conflict. All I ask is that you use my patented aggression therapy mallets.



Strange that Homer should show up in a place he wouldn't normally be seen dead... an educational establishment of all things! Maybe there wasn't time to assemble a 'Lard Lad Donuts' level.

"How is education supposed to make me feel smarter? Besides, every time I learn something new, it pushes some of the old stuff out of my brain. Remember when I took that home wine-making course, and I forgot how to drive?"

(As Marge does some accounting, Homer enters with his latest purchase.) Homer: Marge, look at this! A baby monitor! (into the monitor) Baby to Marge. Baby to Marge. Waa! Waa! Over.

Marge: Homer, I don't know how we can afford all these things on your salary.

Homer: (looks out the window and sees the Power Plant) Hey, why don't I apply at the Nuclear Power Plant. I hear they pay pretty well!

Marge: I don't know. I heard radiation can make you sterile.

Homer: Pfft. Now you tell me!



Next stop is the nuclear plant where we must collect radioactive rods and deposit them in the reactor in the basement, if Marge isn't around to do it for us. Security doors separating the rooms are accessed via passcodes as provided by Maggie. Former foreign exchange student, bomb expert and Albanian super-spy, Adil, is now the only goon standing in our way.

Marge: There, there, Homer. You've caused plenty of industrial accidents and you've always bounced back.



With Adil defeated we're reunited with the whole family in the nuclear reactor, and curiously, acknowledged by the aliens for being such a worthy adversary. To honour our achievement we're officially endorsed as an Intergalactic Space Hero, and the aliens swiftly forget their world domination plans, which is all jolly convenient for us.



In the inaugural NES iteration, this is followed by a shot of a reworked rendering of Mount Rushmore... now incorporating a bust of Bart Simpson right next to Abraham Lincoln. I expect Ocean decided to scrap this as it wouldn't be such a relevant pop-culture monument for European audiences. Guess where else you can find a similar scene? Wah-wah. Nope, it's from They Live.



Reviews published at the time of release were a mixed bag, mostly leaning towards the upper end of mediocre.

"A hit, pure and simple. A few false starts, some slippage and the odd weak license has meant a disappointing Amiga showing from Ocean this year - here's where it all comes right."

83% - Amiga Power (September 1991)

"The Simpsons smacks of quality from the cartoon-quality intro sequence, complete with speech, through to the game itself. Looking very Bart-like, our hero is a highly complex little dude and it'll take a while to figure out all his moves, but once you have, it all becomes a lot simpler. Be warned that this game is no pushover - and some might argue it's a tad too tough. But with plenty to see, explore, try out and chuckle over, this is a game I'll

want to keep coming back to until the challenge is finally completed. My advice is to check this out before parting with any dosh because this may not be your idea of a great game at all..."

83% - Computer and Video Games (September 1991)



"The Simpsons has a very definite look, and it's not been captured here. The Simpsons coin-op gives a much better idea of how the whole thing should have been approached. Hopefully, the conversion of that, if it ever appears, will be a more successful venture."

64% - ACE (October 1991)

"The game is full of (dare I say it) cute little touches like scaring the purple bird in the pet shop out of its cage and the appearances of members of Bart's family to help him. The graphics are well animated, with Bart stomping around, taking high, sproingy jumps. The 'dark screen' effect when he wears his X-ray specs is pretty neat too.

However, my main criticism would be the size of the sprites - particularly Bart himself. This is probably due to the fact that the game is exactly the same as Acclaim's 8 bit NES version, even down to the remarkably small sprite size. And of course, there's the irritating American humour, such as when Bart makes his 'funny' hoax phone calls. But all in all, it would be unfair to deny that it's great fun to 'do the Bart' (man)."

84% - Zero (October 1991)

"It's by no means the worst license I have seen, but there is a lot of wasted potential here. If this is the best Ocean can do with a potentially hot license, then they can eat my shorts."

63% - CU Amiga (September 1991)

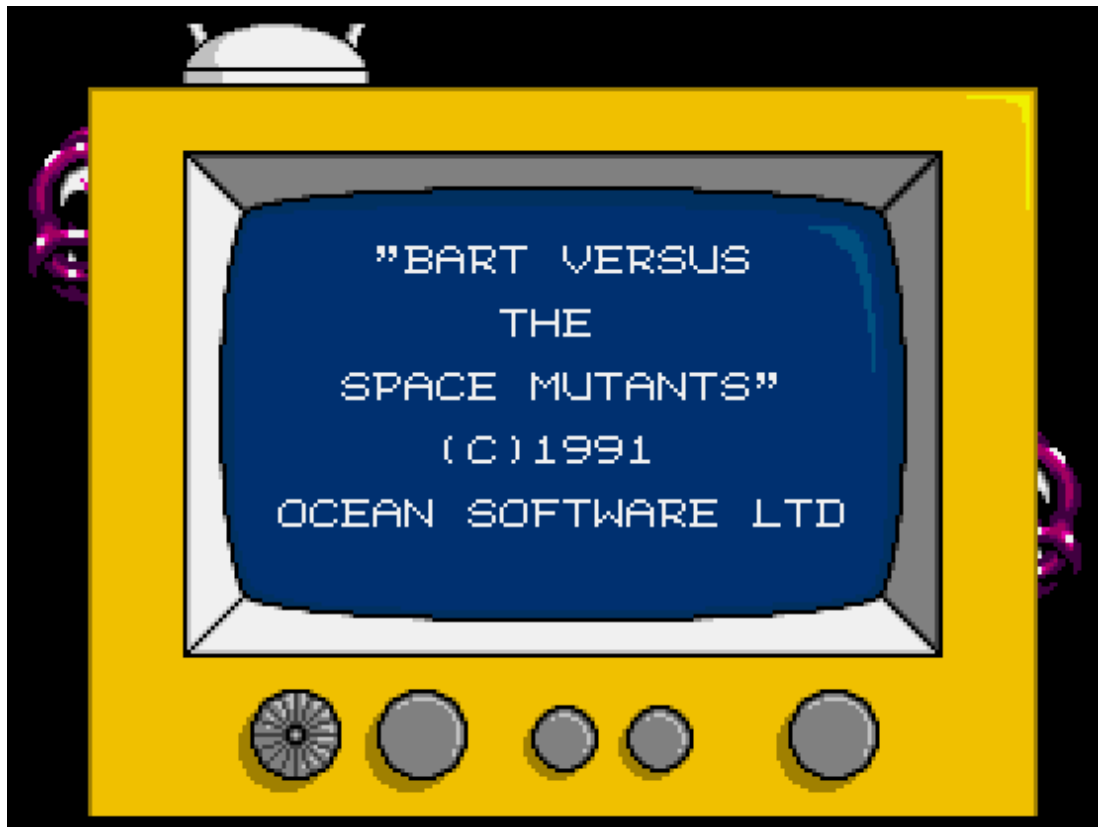
"The Simpsons isn't a brilliant game: it is a good game which uses its license well. It draws on the resources introducing 'real' Simpsons incidents. On top of this it has an addictive edge, even to folk who have never seen a living Bart in their life."

82% - Amiga Format (September 1991)

Despite the uneven, qualified appraisals Bart Versus the Space Mutants reached number 2 in the sales charts in February 1992 (C&VG) and again in April 1995 when it was re-released as a budget title (Amiga Format). In between, it

put in a brief appearance in 17th place in October 1993 (Amiga Action).

Although associating the cherished Simpsons license with Acclaim's offering is "like pouring perfume on a pig", it's by no means an awful game, the familiar characters and settings elevating it above your average platformer for fans of the show.

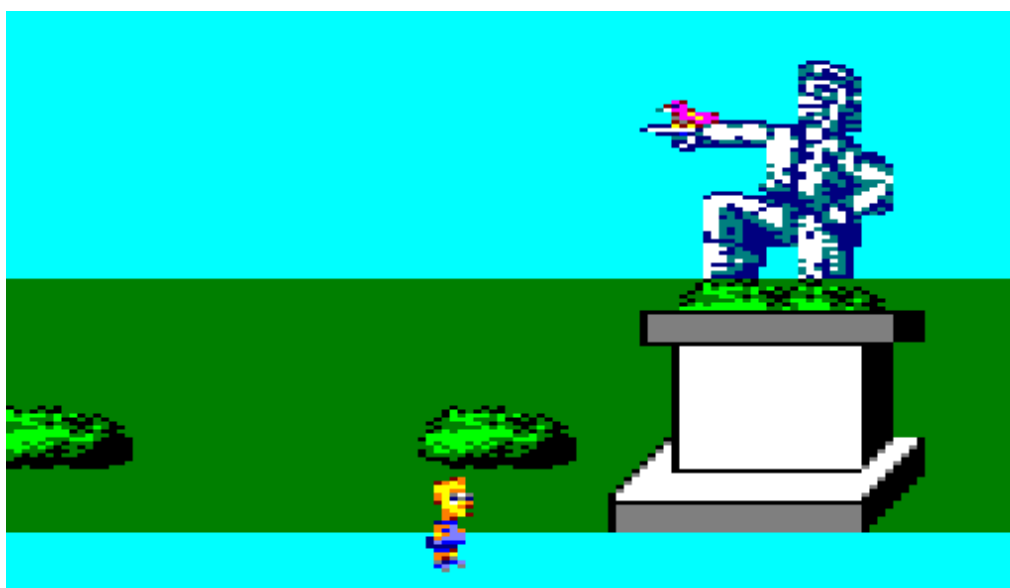


Where it falls down is in the execution of the unwieldy controls which make absolutely no sense, and the inconsistent response to your actions which also makes absolutely no sense.

Sprinting by pushing diagonally up makes it almost impossible to perform running jumps to cross wide chasms, and we're equally hamstrung by Bart's inertia, which has us gradually skidding to a halt in slow-motion.

Even the NES original managed to screw this up by assigning jumping and running to the same button, despite the standard controller having two fire buttons! Holding down the button causes you to run, and you can't do that without instructing Bart to jump first. It's a real mess worthy of "having a cow" over. Man.

Having to enter the inventory each time you want to use your x-ray specs (something you'll need to do dozens of times) is infuriatingly cumbersome when time is tight and quick reflexes are called for.



Scrolling is lethargic on the Amiga and totally absent in the Amstrad and Spectrum ports; there it's substituted for a flick screen. Nonetheless, whichever iteration you play, the levels are enormous, so value for money was never a factor to quibble over. Certain novelty elements such as the prank calls and skateboarding segments are AWOL in the Spectrum and Amstrad editions, while Commodore 64 fans were treated to the whole shebang.



Finally, you never know what you *can* and *can't* jump on. Sometimes you can climb on window ledges, sometimes not, while it's perfectly reasonable to expect to be able to balance on a fitted pane of glass embedded in a door frame!

Graphically Bart Versus the Space Mutants is similarly a let-down, the 8-bit game having been translated to the Amiga so faithfully, believing it to be perfect as it is. Parallax scrolling, clever shading, an expansive colour palette or any evidence of special effects were never a consideration.



As a 16-bit title Bart's first foray into Amiga gaming is an anachronism that stood out like a sore thumb for all the wrong reasons. Of course, in their droves, people bought it anyway, swept along by the hysteria of Simpsons mania, which just goes to show that what your product says on the box is as critical to its success as what goes *inside* it.